



Theology



Who is God?

“This is what the Lord says: ‘Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight,’ declares the Lord.” (Jeremiah 9:23-24, NIV)

“What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.”

“Were we able to extract from any man a complete answer to the question, ‘What comes into your mind when you think about God?’ we might predict with certainty the spiritual future of that man. Were we able to know exactly what our most influential religious leaders think of God today, we might be able with some precision to foretell where the Church will stand tomorrow.”

“It is not a cheerful thought that millions of us who live in a land of Bibles, who belong to churches and labor to promote the Christian religion, may yet pass our whole life on this earth without once having thought or tried to think seriously about the being of God. Few of us have let our hearts gaze in wonder at the I AM, the self-existent self back of which no creature can think. Such thoughts are too painful for us. We prefer to think where it will do more good – about how to build a better mousetrap, for instance, or how to make two blades of grass grow where one grew before. For this we are now paying a too heavy price in the secularization of our religion and the decay of our inner lives.”

“The heaviest obligation lying upon the Christian Church today is to purify and elevate her concept of God until it is once more worthy of Him—and of her.”—A.W. Tozer

❖ Can We Know God?

➤ The Reality...

- God is incomprehensible. While we can know SOME things about God we can't know FULLY even one single thing about God.

➤ The Reason...

- We can't know God fully because He is great and we are sinful.

➤ The Resolution...

- While we can't know God fully, we can understand God truly.
- While God is incomprehensible, He is knowable!

❖ **How Can We Know God?** – I Corinthians 2:10-16

¹⁰ *these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.* ¹¹ *For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.* ¹² *What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us.* ¹³ *This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words.* ¹⁴ *The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit.* ¹⁵ *The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments,* ¹⁶ *for, "Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?"* ¹⁷ *But we have the mind of Christ.*

- Only the Spirit of God knows the fullness of the glory of God.
- If we want to know God, then we need the Spirit to reveal Him to us.
- If we are desperate to know God then we must be desperate for His Spirit.
- If we are not desperate for His Spirit it is a sure indicator that we have grown content with knowing little about God.

❖ **When We Know God**

- Routine religion is no longer tolerable.
- Casual worship is no longer possible.
- Total surrender is no longer optional.
- Global mission is no longer negotiable.

❖ **Let us look now at:**

- The Names of God
- The Attributes of God
- The Mysteries of God

Part 1: The Names of God

*“From the rising of the sun to the place where it sets, the name of the Lord is to be praised.” –
Ps. 113:3*

The names of God provide revelation of God. Exodus 3:13-14, 33:18-19, 34:6-7

The names of God lead to adoration of God. Ps. 8:1, Ps. 29:1-2

❖ **The various names of God**

- *Proper names: Elohim, Yahweh, Adonai...*
- *Personal names: Father, Jesus, Son, Holy Spirit...*
- *Descriptive names: King, Judge, Shepherd...*
- *Titles: Creator, Christ, Messiah...*

Elohim – He is God.

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” Gen. 1:1

Used over 2700 times in the Bible.

Emphasizes:

- God’s power as Creator of all things.
- God’s sufficiency as Sustainer of all things.

Yahweh/Jehovah – He is the LORD.

“God said to Moses, ‘I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’ ” God also said to Moses, “Say to the Israelites, ‘The Lord, the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you.’ This is my name forever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation.”
(Exodus 3:14-15, NIV)

Used over 6800 times in the Bible.

This name was revealed at the covenant God made with His people. Ex. 20:1-3

This name was revealed in Christ. Jn. 8:58, Acts 2:36

Emphasizes:

- God’s personality. Hosea 3:1-5
- God’s goodness. Ex. 34:4-7
 - God’s power. Is. 46:3-4
- God’s authority. Lev. 18:1-5
- God’s presence. Dt. 4:7-8

Adonai – He is Lord/Master

“Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I. Send me!””
(Isaiah 6:8, NIV)

Emphasizes:

- Complete sovereignty in God.
- Complete submission in man.

El Elyon- He is God Most High

*“They remembered that God was their Rock, that God Most High was their Redeemer.”
(Psalm 78:35, NIV)*

Emphasizes:

- God is exalted above all others.
- God alone is able to meet my needs.

El Shaddai – He is God Almighty

*“When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said, “I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless. I will confirm my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers.” Abram fell facedown, and God said to him, “As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. The whole land of Canaan, where you are now an alien, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God.”
(Genesis 17:1-8, NIV)*

Emphasizes:

- God guarantees His Word.
- God guarantees His provision.

Jehovah Jireh – The LORD will provide

*Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place The Lord Will Provide. And to this day it is said,
“On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided.”(Genesis 22:13-14, NIV)*

Provide = To see before.

We will never have a need that was not already known in the mind of God!

Jehovah Sabaoth – The LORD of hosts

*“He who forms the mountains, creates the wind, and reveals his thoughts to man, he who turns dawn to darkness, and treads the high places of the earth— the Lord God Almighty is his name.”
(Amos 4:13, NIV)*

Jehovah Sabaoth is used most often in the prophets.

Jeremiah – 88 times

Zechariah – 55 times

Malachi – 25 times

Haggai – 14 times

God was encouraging His people that He is the LORD who conquers any opposition!

Jehovah Rophe – The Lord who heals.

“Then Moses cried out to the Lord, and the Lord showed him a piece of wood. He threw it into the water, and the water became sweet. There the Lord made a decree and a law for them, and there he tested them. He said, “If you listen carefully to the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the Lord, who heals you.”(Exodus 15:25-26, NIV)

Jehovah Nissi – The Lord is my banner

“So Joshua fought the Amalekites as Moses had ordered, and Moses, Aaron and Hur went to the top of the hill. As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning. When Moses’ hands grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held his hands up—one on one side, one on the other—so that his hands remained steady till sunset. So Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword. Then the Lord said to Moses, “Write this on a scroll as something to be remembered and make sure that Joshua hears it, because I will completely blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven.” Moses built an altar and called it The Lord is my Banner. He said, “For hands were lifted up to the throne of the Lord. The Lord will be at war against the Amalekites from generation to generation.” (Exodus 17:10-16, NIV)

Emphasizes:

- The Lord is our banner of identity.
- The Lord is our flag of victory.

Jehovah Mekadesh – The LORD who makes you holy

“Consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am the Lord your God. Keep my decrees and follow them. I am the Lord, who makes you holy.”(Leviticus 20:7-8, NIV)

Used over 700 times in the Old Testament to describe something that is to be set apart for God’s use.

Jehovah Shalom – The Lord is peace.

“The angel of God said to him, ‘Take the meat and the unleavened bread, place them on this rock, and pour out the broth.’ And Gideon did so. With the tip of the staff that was in his hand, the angel of the Lord touched the meat and the unleavened bread. Fire flared from the rock, consuming the meat and the bread. And the angel of the Lord disappeared. When Gideon realized that it was the angel of the Lord, he exclaimed, ‘Ah, Sovereign Lord! I have seen the angel of the Lord face to face!’ But the Lord said to him, ‘Peace! Do not be afraid. You are not going to die.’ So Gideon built an altar to the Lord there and called it The Lord is Peace.”(Judges 6:20-24, NIV)

Emphasizes:

- God is our perfect peace.
- God is our perfect rest.

Jehovah Tsidkenu – The LORD is our righteousness.

“The days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The Lord Our Righteousness.”(Jeremiah 23:5-6, NIV)

Emphasizes:

- God demonstrates righteousness to His people.
- God attributes righteousness to His people.

Jehovah Shammah – The Lord is there.

“And the name of the city from that time on will be: the Lord is there.”(Ezekiel 48:35, NIV)

The hope of God’s presence is foretold in Ezekiel.

The hope of God’s presence is experienced in Acts.

Jehovah Rohi – The Lord is my Shepherd.

“I myself will tend my sheep and have them lie down, declares the Sovereign Lord. I will search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock with justice.”(Ezekiel 34:15-16, NIV)

Father

He will call out to me, ‘You are my Father, my God, the Rock my Savior.’(Psalm 89:26, NIV)

Think about this contrast:

“Father” was used only 15 times in the Old Testament to refer to God.

“Father” is used in the four Gospels alone 165 times.

Think about this conclusion:

Followers of Jesus have the unique privilege of calling God our Father!

Other Names...

He is King

"For the Lord is the great God, the great King above all gods."(Psalm 95:3, NIV)

He is Judge

"Far be it from you to do such a thing—to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?"(Genesis 18:25, NIV)

He is Redeemer

"I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!"(Job 19:25-27, NIV)

He is the Potter

"Yet, O Lord, you are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand."(Isaiah 64:8, NIV)

He is Light

"This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all."(1 John 1:5, NIV)

He is the Rock

"He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he."(Deuteronomy 32:4, NIV)

He is our Fortress

"Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.(Psalm 46:10-11, NIV)

He is our Shield

"O Lord, how many are my foes! How many rise up against me! Many are saying of me, "God will not deliver him." But you are a shield around me, O Lord; you bestow glory on me and lift up my head. To the Lord I cry aloud, and he answers me from his holy hill. (Psalm 3:1-4, NIV)

He is a Consuming Fire

"Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our "God is a consuming fire." (Hebrews 12:28-29, NIV)

Part 2: The Attributes of God

- ❖ All of God's attributes are personal.

- They describe who He is.

- ❖ All of God's attributes are practical.

- They help us understand how He acts.

- ❖ All of God's attributes are perfect.

"Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect." (Matthew 5:48, NIV)

- ❖ All of God's attributes are permanent.

"To the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen." (Jude 1:25, NIV)

- ❖ All of God's attributes are praiseworthy.

"Praise the Lord, O my soul. O Lord my God, you are very great; you are clothed with splendor and majesty. He wraps himself in light as with a garment; he stretches out the heavens like a tent." (Psalm 104:1-2, NIV)

God's glory is His supreme passion and our supreme satisfaction.

God's attributes can be divided into two categories:

His greatness (non moral) and His goodness (moral)

But both of these categories find their foundation one fundamental attribute of God:

God is Holy

"In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.' At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke." (Isaiah 6:1-4, NIV)

- ❖ God is perfectly unique - *"There is no one holy like the Lord; there is no one besides you; there is no Rock like our God." (1 Samuel 2:2, NIV)*

- God is completely separate.

- God is absolutely pure.

His Holiness As It Relates To His Greatness

❖ The Independence of God

- God is both self-existent and self-sufficient.

Does God exist?

“The fool says in his heart, “There is no God.”

They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good.” (Psalm 14:1, NIV)

- Look at creation: *“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” (Genesis 1:1, NIV)*
 - “Ex nihilo” – out of nothing
 - Threefold progression:
 - Whatever begins to exist has a cause.
 - The universe began to exist.
 - Therefore, the universe has a cause.
 - Look at design: God leaves the imprints of His glory upon the design of the earth.

“The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.” (Romans 1:18-20, NIV)
 - Look at morality: The existence of objective moral values points to a moral Creator.

“They show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.” (Romans 2:15, NIV)
 - So where did God come from?
 - God was never created and never came into being.

“Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.” (Psalm 90:1-2, NIV)
 - God has no origin.
 - God is the uncaused One.
 - God is entirely independent.
 - God does not derive His life from any external source.
 - God does not need us for anything.

“For every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird in the mountains, and the creatures of the field are mine. If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the world is mine, and all that is in it.” (Psalm 50:10-12, NIV)
- God does not need our companionship.
 - God does not need our worship.
 - God does not need our discipleship.

- Does this make us meaningless?
 - Our meaning in life is not found in God's need for us.
 - Our meaning in life is found in our need for God.
- Does this make us insignificant?
 - God is infinitely significant.
 - Our significance is found in embracing His infinite significance.
- This is ultimate love...
 - God is not compelled by some need to love us.
 - God chooses to love us with a totally unselfish love.
 - God involves us in His mission not because He needs us, but because He loves us.
- God needs no one, yet He works through anyone.
 - God exists for Himself.
 - We exist for God.

❖ The Spirituality of God

- God is both a person and a spirit

- God as spirit

"God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth." (John 4:24, NIV)

- God is not physical.
- God is not visible.

"Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen." (1 Timothy 1:17, NIV)

"God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen." (1 Timothy 6:15-16, NIV)

- God has no size or dimensions.
- God is not limited to any geographical location.
- God is not destructible.

- God as a person

- God is not a force to be reckoned with.
- God is not an object to be manipulated.
- God is a person to be loved.

❖ The Eternity of God

➤ God is both infinite and eternal.

- God as infinite

“Can you fathom the mysteries of God? Can you probe the limits of the Almighty? They are higher than the heavens—what can you do? They are deeper than the depths of the grave—what can you know?” (Job 11:7-8, NIV)

- God is unlimited.
- God is unlimitable.
- God is measureless.
- God is boundless.

- God as eternal

“Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God. You turn men back to dust, saying, “Return to dust, O sons of men.” For a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night. You sweep men away in the sleep of death; they are like the new grass of the morning—though in the morning it springs up new, by evening it is dry and withered.”
(Psalm 90:1-6, NIV)

- *God has no beginning.*
- *God has no end.*
- *God is Lord over time.*
- *God has no past or future – He is the Great I AM!*
- *God is unchanging throughout all time.*
- *God sees all time equally vividly.*

❖ The Omnipotence of God

➤ God has infinite power to do all things in His holy will.

“Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.” (Matthew 19:26, NIV)

➤ God’s power extends...

- Over all creation
- Through all history

“From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live.” (Acts 17:26, NIV)

❖ **The Omnipresence of God**

➤ **All of God is always present.**

"Am I only a God nearby, declares the Lord, 'and not a God far away? Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth?' declares the Lord." (Jeremiah 23:23-24, NIV)

- God cannot be contained or described by spatial dimensions.
- God is present everywhere, but distinct from everything.
- God's presence is manifested differently in different circumstances.

- Sometimes He is present to sustain.

"He is before all things, and in him all things hold together." (Colossians 1:17, NIV)

- Sometimes He is present to punish.

"I saw the Lord standing by the altar, and he said: 'Strike the tops of the pillars so that the thresholds shake. Bring them down on the heads of all the people; those who are left I will kill with the sword. Not one will get away, none will escape. Though they dig down to the depths of the grave, from there my hand will take them. Though they climb up to the heavens, from there I will bring them down. Though they hide themselves on the top of Carmel, there I will hunt them down and seize them. Though they hide from me at the bottom of the sea, there I will command the serpent to bite them. Though they are driven into exile by their enemies, there I will command the sword to slay them. I will fix my eyes upon them for evil and not for good.'" (Amos 9:1-4, NIV)

- Sometimes He is present to bless.

"You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand." (Psalm 16:11, NIV)

God is always accessible and we are never alone!

❖ **The Omniscience of God**

➤ **God has all knowledge and all wisdom at all times.**

"For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything." (1 John 3:20, NIV)

➤ **God possesses perfect knowledge.**

- He knows Himself and all things (actual and possible) perfectly.

"Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account." (Hebrews 4:13, NIV)

➤ **God knows everything at every moment.**

- He never learns.
- He never discovers.
- He never forgets.
- He never ponders.
- He is never surprised.
- God simply knows

❖ The Immutability of God

➤ God's perfections are unchanging.

"He also says, "In the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will roll them up like a robe; like a garment they will be changed. But you remain the same, and your years will never end." (Hebrews 1:10-12, NIV)

➤ God's purposes are unchanging.

"The Lord foils the plans of the nations; he thwarts the purposes of the peoples. But the plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations." (Psalm 33:10-11, NIV)

➤ God's promises are unchanging.

"The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever." (Isaiah 40:8, NIV)

His Holiness As It Relates To His Goodness

❖ The Integrity of God

- God is true.
- God always tells the truth.
- God always proves true.

“God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?” (Numbers 23:19, NIV)

- Implications of God’s Integrity...
 - God is the final standard of truth.
 - Because God is true, His Word is trustworthy.
 - We are to be imitators of God’s integrity.

- Loving Truth
- Hating falsehood.

“The Lord detests lying lips, but he delights in men who are truthful.” (Proverbs 12:22, NIV)

❖ The Love of God

*“And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him.”
(1 John 4:16, NIV)*

- God eternally gives and shares Himself.
- God demonstrates His love
 - He pursues His people
 - He provides for His people
 - He protects His people

- God’s love and its effect on us.

- We express our love to God.

“Jesus replied: “ ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ ”

(Matthew 22:37, NIV)

- We extend our love to others.

“And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ ” (Matthew 22:39, NIV)

❖ The Mercy and Grace of God

➤ God's love is demonstrated in His grace and mercy toward His people.

- God's mercy is the love of God applied to our suffering.

"Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need." (Hebrews 4:16, NIV)

- God's grace is God's love applied to our sin.

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9, NIV)

- Grace involves no merit in us.
- Grace involves no compensation from us.
- Grace is the source of our salvation.

❖ The Justice of God

➤ God administers His Kingdom in accordance with His law.

"Listen to me, my people; hear me, my nation: The law will go out from me; my justice will become a light to the nations. My righteousness draws near speedily, my salvation is on the way, and my arm will bring justice to the nations. The islands will look to me and wait in hope for my arm." (Isaiah 51:4-5, NIV)

- He is always fair.

"For God does not show favoritism." (Romans 2:11, NIV)

- He is always right.

"He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he." (Deuteronomy 32:4, NIV)

➤ His judgments are :

- Authoritative
- Eternal
- Irreversible

➤ Justice and other attributes...

- Love without justice is mere sentimentality.
- Omnipotence without justice is plain brutality.
- Love, justice, and omnipotence together are a glorious reality!

At the cross, God shows Himself to both just and justifier!

❖ The Wrath of God

“All this is evidence that God’s judgment is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering. God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you.” (2 Thessalonians 1:5-10, NIV)

➤ God intensely hates all sin.

“You love righteousness and hate wickedness...(Psalm 45:7, NIV)

➤ God intensely hates all sinners.

“The arrogant cannot stand in your presence; you hate all who do wrong. You destroy those who tell lies; bloodthirsty and deceitful men the Lord abhors.” (Psalm 5:5-6, NIV)

➤ Wrath and other attributes...

- Love without wrath is indifferent.
- Justice without wrath is ineffective.
- Love, justice, and wrath together are indescribable.

*“To wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—
Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.” (1 Thessalonians 1:10, NIV)*

- We deserved the wrath of God.
- Jesus satisfied the wrath of God.
- We are saved from the wrath of God.

Part 3 – The Mysteries of God

“The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law.” (Deuteronomy 29:29, NIV)

“Left to ourselves we tend immediately to reduce God to manageable terms. We want to get Him where we can use Him, or at least know where He is when we need Him. We want a God we can in some measure control. We need the feeling of security that comes from knowing what God is like, and what He is like is of course a composite of all the religious pictures we have seen, all the best people we have known or heard about, and all the sublime ideas we have entertained. If all this sounds strange to modern ears, it is only because we have for a full half century taken God for granted. The glory of God has not been revealed to this generation of men.”
—A.W. Tozer

“Because all Christian doctrines relate to God who is ultimately beyond our comprehension, there will inevitably be some element of mystery, or transcendence, that cannot be reduced to human understanding. Nonetheless, within these limits the theological effort must be carried on.”
—J. Rodman Williams

“Man with all his shrewdness is as stupid about understanding by himself the mysteries of God, as [a donkey] is incapable of understanding musical harmony.”
—John Calvin

The Trinity

“To meditate on the three Persons of the Godhead is to walk in thought through the garden eastward in Eden and to tread on holy ground. Our sincerest effort to grasp the incomprehensible mystery of the Trinity must remain forever futile, and only by deepest reverence can it be saved from actual presumption.”—A.W. Tozer

➤ Three Foundational truths....

- God is three persons.
 - Scripture refers to God with plural pronouns.

“Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.’ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”(Genesis 1:26-27, NIV)

“Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other.”(Genesis 11:7, NIV)

*“Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?’ And I said, ‘Here am I. Send me!’”
(Isaiah 6:8, NIV)*

- The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are persons.

A question that arises: “Is the Holy Spirit a person or a power?”

“But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.”(John 16:13-14, NIV)

The Holy Spirit teaches, testifies, intercedes, searches, knows, gives gifts, speaks, can be grieved.

- The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are distinct.

“As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.” (Matthew 3:16-18, NIV)

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,(Matthew 28:19, NIV)

- Each person is fully God.
- The persons of the Trinity have different functions.
 - Consider creation...
 - God the Father is speaking
 - God the Son is implementing
 - God the Spirit is hovering
 - Consider salvation...
 - God the Father plans
 - God the Son obeys
 - God the Spirit applies
 - Consider the difference...
 - The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are equal in their attributes.
 - The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are different in their relationships.

➤ Two Practical Conclusions...

- Our God is worthy.
 - It is appropriate to worship the Father
 - It is appropriate to worship the Son
 - It is appropriate to worship the Spirit
- Our mind is finite.
 - The Trinity is divinely revealed, not humanly constructed.
 - The Trinity is incomprehensible.
 - All analogies are insufficient
 - Can we know the doctrine of the Trinity exhaustively? No!
 - Can we know the doctrine of the Trinity truly? Absolutely!

The Trinity... “Try to explain it, and you’ll lose your mind; but try to deny it, and you’ll lose your soul.”

The Sovereign Will of God

❖ **Sovereignty:** God is guiding all things according to His plan.

➤ God has a plan.

“Have you not heard? Long ago I ordained it. In days of old I planned it; now I have brought it to pass, that you have turned fortified cities into piles of stone.”(Isaiah 37:26, NIV)

“In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps.”(Proverbs 16:9, NIV)

- Nothing happens apart from God’s activity.
- Nothing happens accidentally.

➤ God’s plan is eternal.

“Your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.”(Psalm 139:16, NIV)

“For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.”(Ephesians 1:4, NIV)

➤ God’s plan is purposeful.

- His plan is for His glory.

“Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west. I will say to the north, ‘Give them up!’ and to the south, ‘Do not hold them back.’ Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth— everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.”(Isaiah 43:5-7, NIV)

- Our salvation is for His glory.

“He predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.”(Ephesians 1:5-6, NIV)

➤ God’s plan is universal.

- He is sovereign over all nature.
- He is sovereign over all nations.
- He is sovereign over all our days.
- He is sovereign over all our actions.
- He is sovereign over all our successes and failures.
- He is sovereign over all our gifts and talents.
- He is sovereign over all our suffering.

➤ God's plan is compatible

- God is sovereign and man is responsible.

"But Joseph said to them, 'Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.'" (Genesis 50:19-20, NIV)

- God is in charge
- We are making choices

"This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross." (Acts 2:23, NIV)

➤ God's plan is beneficial

"He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he." (Deuteronomy 32:4, NIV)

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28, NIV)

Embrace both the revealed will and secret will of God.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight." (Proverbs 3:5-6, NIV)

God and Evil

The Problem of Evil...

"Either God wants to abolish evil, and cannot; or he can, but does not want to; or he cannot and does not want to. If he wants to, but cannot, he is impotent. If he can, and does not want to, he is wicked. But, if God both can and wants to abolish evil, then how comes evil in the world?"—Epicurus, 4th Century philosopher

The problem involves three things:

1. The greatness of God. If God is great then He is able to prevent evil.
2. The goodness of God. If God is good, then he will not permit evil to occur.
3. The presence of evil. Evil exists in this world.

Insufficient answers...

- Atheism – Evil does not exist.
- Christian Science – Evil is an illusion.
- New Age – Evil is the result of ignorance.
- Dualism – God/Good and Evil and two equal forces and opposite in purpose.
- Fatalism – A blind fate determines the depth of evil in our lives.
- Process and Open Theism – God hates evil but has no power to do anything about it.

The Biblical Answer

The greatness of God: GOD OVER EVIL.

The goodness of God: GOD BEHIND EVIL.

The presence of Evil: GOD AMIDST EVIL.

❖ God over evil

- God is sovereign over evil nations and rulers.
"Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever; wisdom and power are his. He changes times and seasons; he sets up kings and deposes them. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning.(Daniel 2:20-21, NIV)
- God is sovereign over demons and evil spirits.
"When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him. He shouted at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Swear to God that you won't torture me!" For Jesus had said to him, "Come out of this man, you evil spirit!" Then Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" "My name is Legion," he replied, "for we are many." And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area."(Mark 5:6-10, NIV)

*"And though this world with devils filled,
Should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear, for God hath willed
His truth to triumph through us.
The prince of darkness grim,
We tremble not for him;
His rage we can endure,
For lo! His doom is sure;
One little word will fell him."
—Martin Luther*

- God is sovereign over the temptations that we face.
"Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."(Luke 22:31-32, NIV)

➤ God is sovereign over suffering and persecution.

"Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings."(1 Peter 5:8-9, NIV)

➤ God is sovereign over disasters.

"The breath of God produces ice, and the broad waters become frozen. He loads the clouds with moisture; he scatters his lightning through them. At his direction they swirl around over the face of the whole earth to do whatever he commands them. He brings the clouds to punish men, or to water his earth and show his love. 'Listen to this, Job; stop and consider God's wonders.'"(Job 37:10-14, NIV)

➤ God is sovereign over sickness and disease.

"...how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him."(Acts 10:38, NIV)

➤ God is sovereign over death.

"See now that I myself am He! There is no god besides me. I put to death and I bring to life, I have wounded and I will heal, and no one can deliver out of my hand."(Deuteronomy 32:39, NIV)

❖ **God Behind Evil**

➤ God relates to sin variably.

- He prevents sin.

"Then God said to him in the dream, 'Yes, I know you did this with a clear conscience, and so I have kept you from sinning against me. That is why I did not let you touch her.'"(Genesis 20:6, NIV)

- He permits sin.

"But my people would not listen to me; Israel would not submit to me. So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts to follow their own devices."(Psalm 81:11-12, NIV)

- He directs sin.

"But Joseph said to them, 'Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.'"(Genesis 50:19-20, NIV)

- He limits sin.

"The Lord said to Satan, 'Very well, then, everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself do not lay a finger.'" Then Satan went out from the presence of the Lord."(Job 1:12, NIV)

"No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it."(1 Corinthians 10:13, NIV)

- He NEVER directly causes sin.

"When tempted, no one should say, 'God is tempting me.'" For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death."(James 1:13-15, NIV)

- God never sins in Scripture.
- God is never blamed for sin in Scripture.

❖ God Amidst Evil

➤ The picture of Job:

- See my goodness: I am with you.

What we need is not an explanation but revelation.

What we need is not an answer but answerer.

- See my greatness: I am in control.

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” (Romans 8:28, NIV)

“God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains. It is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world.”—C.S. Lewis

“For it is often the case, as all the saints know, that fellowship with the Father and the Son is most vivid and sweet, and Christian joy is greatest, when the cross is heaviest.”—J.I. Packer

➤ The picture of the cross:

- See my goodness: I am with you.
- See my greatness: I am in control.

Evil is temporary.

God is ultimate.

“What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: “For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.” No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. “(Romans 8:31-39, NIV)

*“No matter how deep our darkness, he is deeper still.”
—Corrie Ten Boom*

*“He giveth more grace when the burdens grow greater
He sendeth more strength when the labors increase
To added affliction, he addeth his mercy
To multiplied trials, His multiplied peace
When we have exhausted our store of endurance
When our strength has failed and the day’s half done,
When we reach the end of our hoarded resources
Our Father’s own giving has only begun
His love has no limit
His grace has no measure
His power has no boundaries known unto men
For out of His infinite riches in Jesus
He giveth and giveth and giveth again.”
—Annie Johnston Flynt, Hymn Writer*

➤ The Picture of eternity:

- We will forever worship God in His greatness.
- We will forever enjoy God in His goodness.
- We will never experience evil again.

“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” He said to me: “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son.”(Revelation 21:1-7, NIV)

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